



News for Immediate Release

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Montana Sportsmen Support EPA Assessment of Bristol Bay, Alaska watershed

Call for protection for North America's largest salmon run, threatened by proposed Pebble Mine

MISSOULA, Mont. – Responding to the release of the Environmental Protection Agency's assessment of the Bristol Bay, Alaska watershed, leaders of Montana's recreational angling community urged the federal government to take action to safeguard the bay's irreplaceable fisheries and stop the proposed Pebble Mine, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership announced today.

"Montana anglers understand the importance of healthy fisheries to our outdoor opportunities, our local economies and our way of life," said Bruce Farling, Executive Director of Montana Trout Unlimited. **"We applaud the EPA's actions in support of conserving the nation's greatest remaining wild salmon run in Alaska's Bristol Bay."**

Released today, the EPA's "Watershed Assessment" of Bristol Bay, confirms that the bay has the largest salmon runs in North America and is a unique global fishery. Up to 40 million sockeye salmon return to the bay annually en route to their spawning grounds. This irreplaceable fishery would be jeopardized by the Pebble Mine, which would produce 10 billion tons of toxic waste during its existence.

"Bristol Bay is too important a fishery to risk on a large-scale mine like Pebble," said K.C. Walsh, owner and president of Simms Fishing Products, located in Bozeman, Montana. **"Conserving Bristol Bay is important to our customers and to the future of jobs in recreational angling and related businesses. We commend the EPA's decision and ask President Obama to secure Bristol Bay once and for all."**

The federal assessment issued today will form the basis of an EPA decision on whether to initiate a 404c process under the Clean Water Act to protect the waters and wetlands that comprise

Bristol Bay. Section 404(c) authorizes the EPA, after public hearings and a science review process, to conserve water resources that are important to for fish spawning and wildlife habitat.

“Montana anglers join other sportsmen, Alaska tribes, native corporations, commercial fishermen and others in urging the EPA to exercise its authority under the federal Clean Water Act to restrict or prohibit disposal of mine waste into the Bristol Bay,” said Dan Vermillion of Sweetwater Travel in Livingston, Montana, whose company owns two lodges in Bristol Bay. **“Not only would the Pebble Mine affect my family and our business, but it also would impact the livelihoods of the Montana guides we employ as well as the hundreds of Montanans who travel to Alaska each summer to work in both the commercial and sportfishing industries. These valuable public resources must be conserved.”**

Forty-two Montana-based outdoor and retail organizations and businesses, including Mystery Ranch Backpacks, R.L. Winston Rod Company, and Yellow Dog Flyfishing Adventures, have signed a [letter](#) urging EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson “to use all the tools at your disposal to protect a sport fishing and hunting destination that is unrivaled in America and perhaps the world, for this and future generations of sportsmen and women.”

“Recreationally, economically and culturally, Bristol Bay is the single most important wild salmon fishery in the world,” said Joel Webster, director of the TRCP Center for Western Lands, who lives in Missoula, Mont. **“Sport fishing in the bay generates \$60 million annually and supports more than 800 full- and part-time jobs. Anglers in Montana and across the nation offer thanks to the EPA for acknowledging the importance of Bristol Bay – and the disastrous impacts of the Pebble Mine.”**

The EPA is taking public comments on the [draft Bristol Bay watershed assessment](#) through July 23.

[Learn more about sportsmen’s work to save Bristol Bay.](#)

Inspired by the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the TRCP is a coalition of organizations and grassroots partners working together to preserve the traditions of hunting and fishing.

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